

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3110
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY
SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA SUMMARY FOR MAY 15-16, 1977: PALESTINIANS/
SYRIANS DISCUSS PALESTINE QUESTION "ON INTERNATIONAL
LEVEL"

SUMMARY: SERIES OF PLO, SYRO-PLO AND SARG MEETINGS APPEARED TO
HAVE DISCUSSED PLO POSTURE TOWARD CURRENT SETTLEMENT PROCESS.
PRO-SYRIAN PALESTINIANS CRITICIZED PLO-RAKAH CONTACTS.
INTERMITTENT PRESS ATTACKS ON IRAQI REGIME CONTINUED. ADF
COMMUNIQUE PUBLISHED CLAIMING RECENT ADF CLASHES WITH
SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS IN NORTH LEBANON INSTIGATED BY SMUGGLERS.
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MEANWHILE AL-BAATH EDITORIAL, APPARENTLY DIRECTED AGAINST
LEBANESE RIGHT, WARNED AGAINST PARTITION OF LEBANON OR HAMPER-
ING OF SARKIS. EDITORIAL PRAISED PRES. CARTER FOR
RAISING PALESTINIAN ISSUE. END SUMMARY

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1. MEDIA GAVE PROMINENT ATTENTION TO SEVERAL MEETINGS WHICH OCCURRED HERE SAID TO HAVE DEALT WITH "DEVELOPMENT OF PALESTINIAN ISSUE ON INTERNATIONAL LEVEL." MAY 15 PRESS FEATURED PICTURE OF AL-ASSAD MEETING WITH ARAFAT AND FIVE OTHER MEMBERS OF PLO EXCOMM. CONVENING OF PALESTINE CENTRAL COUNCIL HERE ALSO REPORTED WITH MEMBERS OF PLO EXCOMM IN ATTENDANCE. FAHOUM TOLD SANA THAT MEETINGS DEALT WITH "POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS ON THE ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS.." HE SAID PCC DECIDED TO FORM SIX COMMITTEES "TO CONTINUE PALESTINIAN ACTION IN ALL AREAS AND TO STUDY VARIOUS PALESTINIAN ISSUES." EACH COMMITTEE WOULD BE HEADED BY PCC MEMBER AND INCLUDE MEMBERS DRAWN FROM PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL. COMMITTEES INCLUDE FOREIGN RELATIONS, OCCUPIED HOMELAND, MILITARY AFFAIRS AND SECURITY, INFORMATION AND CULTURE, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND LABOR, AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS.

2. MAY 16 PRESS HEADLINED: "AT MEETING OF NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE FRONT, PRES. AL-ASSAD REVIEWS RESULTS OF HIS MOSCOW AND GENEVA VISITS AND SITUATION IN THE AREA." AGAIN ARTICLE REPORTED THAT "REVIEW MADE OF DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.

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COMMENT: WHILE ABU-MAYZAR ON MAY 14 AT CONCLUSION PLO EXCOMM MEETINGS REPEATED PLO REFUSAL TO ACCEPT UNSC RES. 242 AND TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL, SUBSEQUENT USE OF SAME FORMULA IN SYRIAN PRESS TO DISCUSS AL-ASSAD'S MEETING WITH EXCOMM MEMBERS WITH SYRIAN NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FRONT INDICATED THAT REPORT PLO MAY BE READY TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE IN RETURN FOR SIMILAR RECOGNITION FROM ISRAEL HAS SPARKED SYRO-PALESTINIAN AND INTRA-PALESTINIAN DISCUSSIONS OF MATTER. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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3. PALESTINIAN-RAKAH CONTACTS. EXCERPTS FROM SPEECH RALLY SPONSORED BY PALESTINE BRANCH OF BAATH PARTY IN LOCAL REFUGEE CAMP ON 29TH ANIVERSARY OF -PARTITION OF PALESTINE" (FOUNDING OF ISRAEL) PUBLISHED ON AL-BAATH'S WEEKLY PALESTINE ISSUES PAGE. RALLY USED TO AGIN CRITICIZE MEETINGS BETWEEN PLO AND RAKAH PARTY OFFICIALS. ONE SPEECH SAID TO HAVE "POINTED OUT RISKS INVOLVED IN SEPARATE STANDPOINTS THE MOST EVIDENT OF WHICH IS WEAKENING OF THE ARAB POSITION" IN REFERRING TO SUCH CONTACTS.

4. IRAQ. PRESS MAY 15 CARRIED ANOTHER BRIEF INDIRECT ATTACK ON IRAQ, CLAIMING GROUP FROM NATIONAL UNION OF IRAQI

STUDENTS IN YUGOSLAVIA ISSUED STATEMENT DENOUNCING DEATH SENTENCES PASSED BY "FASCIST IRAQI REGIME."

5. LEBANON. ADF COMMUNIQUE EXPLAINING RECENT CLASHES IN NORTH LEBANON GIVEN PROMINENT PLACE ON FRONT PAGES. COMMUNIQUE CLAIMED THAT SUBVERSIVE GROUP "THOUGHT TO BE FROM BAND OF SMUGGLERS" FROM WHICH ADF HAD SEVERAL DAYS PREVIOUS CONFISCATED CONTRABAND TOBACCO HAD OPENED FIRE ON SYRIAN PATROL KILLING TWO AND WOUNDING THREE ADF TROOPS.

6. MAY 16 AL-BAATH EDITORIAL BY AMID AL-KHULI SEEMED PRINCIPALLY DIRECTED AT HARD-LINE RIGHTISTS. IN COLUMN ENTITLED "THE CENTRAL TASK IN LEBANON" AL-KHULI WARNED OF FRESH ATTEMPTS AT PARTITIONING LEBANON OCCURRING DESPITE FACT THIS WOULD BE MAJOR DISASTER FOR LEBANON. HE SAID THEIR ALSO DESPERATE DEMANDS FOR SOLUTIONS TO LEBANON'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SITUATION WHICH "EXCEED LEBANON'S OBJECTIVES, POTENTIALS, AND DELICATE CIRCUMSTANCES WITHIN SCOPE WHICH PRES. SARKIS MOVING (READ RIGHTWING DEMANDS FOR STRICT AND IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEBANESE INTERPRETATION OF CAIRO AGREEMENT). HE ALLEGED THAT THESE ACTS HAMPERING ABILITY SARKIS TO REBUILD ARMY AND TO START IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO AGREEMENT. HE CONCLUDED THAT LEBANON WOULD HAVE NO "NATIONAL DIGNITY OR POLITICAL PRESENCE" IF UNDER "A VILLAGE LEBANON." (PRESUMABLY HE MEANT PARTITIONED OR UNDER HIGHLY DECENTRALIZED POLITICAL SYSTEM.)

6. CARTER-AL-ASSAD MEETING. BAATH COLUMNIST WROTE THAT MEETING HAD EXCEEDED PRIOR EXPECTATIONS AND CARTER DEALING WITH ISSUE IN MANNER AIMED AT SEEKING REAL SETTLEMENT TO THE PROBLEM DESPITE HIS SHORT TERM IN OFFICE. HE NOTED "GESTURES" WHICH DISTINGUISHED PRES. CARTER FROM HIS PREDECESSORS--PRINCIPALLY HIS RAISING OF PALESTINIAN ISSUE. MURPHY

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